

## **SECTION 15 - REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER MAINTENANCE.**

### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS.**

A. The NCOIC of each nursing unit/clinic will ensure compliance with the following policy.

B. Approval and inspection of each device must be performed by medical maintenance before being used in this facility.

C. Each refrigerator and freezer will have a non-mercury thermometer present. This will be placed in the warmest part of each refrigeration unit.

D. Separate refrigerators will be used for medications and food. Each refrigerator will be labeled "STAFF FOOD ONLY" or "PATIENT FOOD ONLY" or "LABORATORY SPECIMENS ONLY" or "MEDICATIONS ONLY."

### **II. SPECIFIC CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE POLICIES.**

#### **A. Maintenance and Temperature Monitoring.**

1. A temperature record chart will be posted on the door of each refrigerator unit that contains Medications, Patient Food, or Laboratory Specimens. Refrigerators designated for staff food only do not require daily documented temperatures.

2. Each day that the section is open for business, refrigerators and freezers will be checked for proper temperature and the results recorded on the chart. Freezers should be maintained between (-4° to 14°) Fahrenheit (F) or (-20° to 10°) Celsius (C). Refrigerator temperatures range between 36 to 46° F, depending on the contents. Some warming may occur throughout the day with use. Medical Maintenance should be contacted immediately if temperature variance occurs.

3. To facilitate notification of a power failure or other mechanical problem that may have occurred when the section is closed, fill a small plastic cup with ice cubes and place a penny on the top. Place this in the freezer. If a significant variance has occurred, the penny will be at the bottom of the cup. A digital clock plugged into the same outlet may also be used – if there was a power failure, the LED will be blinking.

4. Never mix the contents of a designated refrigerator.

a. MEDICATIONS ONLY - maintain only medications - no food. Individual, covered containers of orange juice are the exception in a pharmacy setting where there is no other refrigerator. Maintain at 36°-46° F (2°-8° C.). Record daily temperatures. Freezers that hold Varicella vaccine must be maintained at 0° F. Many vaccines are particularly temperature sensitive and may be damaged if frozen.

b. LABORATORY SPECIMENS ONLY - may contain blood, body fluids, tissue samples, and/or reagents with human components that are used for waive testing - i.e. - urine. Maintain at 36-42° F, (2-6° C). Record daily temperatures.

c. PATIENT FOOD ONLY - must be maintained at the designated temperature to prevent contamination of patient food. Proper temperature control is the most effective means for minimizing the risk of foodborne illness and reducing loss through spoilage. IAW TB MED 530, store food at 40° F or below (avoid freezing). Record daily temperatures. The range of 37° to 43 ° F is acceptable. Do not store staff lunches or other personal food in this refrigerator.

#### B. Cleaning.

1. Spills should be wiped up immediately as they are an excellent media for bacterial growth.

2. Scheduled cleaning will be performed at least monthly or more frequently based on the state of cleanliness and use of the unit.

3. If ice accumulation in the freezer is greater than 1/8 inch, it should be defrosted and cleaned.

4. During the thawing and cleaning of a unit, all contents should be moved and placed in another unit where they will be chilled or frozen.

5. Shelves will be removed from inside of the freezer during cleaning. The inside of the refrigerator, freezer, and the shelves and seal around the doors of the unit will be washed with a mild detergent solution. This will be followed by a rinse with a solution of 1:10 sodium hypochlorite (bleach) or an approved hospital-approved disinfectant and then potable water. The unit should be allowed to air dry before power is resumed. Contact time of one minute with the surface will reduce pathogenic bacterial to safe levels.

6. A notation will be made on the temperature chart indicating date unit was cleaned.

#### V. REFERENCES.

A. APIC Infection Control and Applied Epidemiology Principles and Practices. Mosby, St. Louis, 2000, Chapter 111:4-5.

B. TB Med 530 Nov 1991

C. United States Pharmacopeia XXII

D. National formulary XVII.

E. TM 743-200-1

F. NACCLS – 1992

G. American Association of Blood Bankers, 2000.

H. Coe, Charles P. Preparing the Pharmacy for JCAHO survey, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

Refrigerator Type	Range	Frequency	Documented ?	IAW
<b>Food</b> Patient Nourishments	37° -43 ° Fahrenheit (2°-6° C) or below	Daily	Yes	TB MED 530 Nov 1991
<b>Food</b> Staff & Personal use	37° -43 ° Fahrenheit (2°-6° C) or below	NA	NO	JCAHO, 2000
<b>Medications</b>	36-46° Fahrenheit (2°-8° C)	Daily	Yes	1. United States Pharmacopeia XXII 2. National formulary XVII.
<b>Medications that require freezing</b>	0° Fahrenheit	Daily	Yes	1. United States Pharmacopeia XXII 2. National formulary XVII.
<b>Laboratory Specimens</b> Tissue, breast milk storage, blood, body fluids, & testing reagents that contain body fluids.	36-42° Fahrenheit  (2°-6° C)	Daily	Yes	DHCS Infection Control Manual, 2000  <i>NOTE: Plasma is stored at -34 Centigrade.</i>

## **DEFINITIONS**

**COLD** - Any temperature NOT exceeding 8 degrees Celsius (**46 degrees Fahrenheit**).

A refrigerator is a cold place in which the temperature is maintained thermostatically between 2 degrees and 8 degrees Celsius (**36 degrees and 46 degrees Fahrenheit**).

A freezer is a cold place in which the temperature is maintained thermostatically between (**-4 degrees and 14 degrees Fahrenheit**) or -20° to 10° Celsius.

**COOL** - Any temperature between 8 degrees Celsius and 15 degrees Celsius (**46 degrees and 59 degrees Fahrenheit**). An article, for which storage in a cool place is directed may, alternatively be stored in a refrigerator, UNLESS specified in the product information.

**ROOM TEMPERATURE** - The temperature prevailing in a working area.

